

Policy Statement

It is the priority of **Little Stars on the Lane** to protect all children attending our service and all persons working in our service from the transmission of infections. The health and well-being of all children, staff and visitors to our service is paramount and our aim is to prevent and manage any infection which may be present in the service. This policy is available and communicated to all parents, children and staff. . This policy has been updated in line with current guidance the [HSPC Infection Prevention and Control guidance for services providing childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), the DCYA's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) and [Tusla's Children Services Regulations Guidance Document for Early Years Services: COVID-19](#)

Principle

This policy is underwritten by the the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Regulations (The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services)(Amendments) Regulations 2016. and the Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Rationale

Infection can lead to serious ill-health among children. Infection control procedures seek to reduce the risk of children getting sick in a service by ensuring good hygiene is followed and the risk of infection is minimised. This will be communicated with parents, so good hygiene and infection control practices will be carried over from the service to home and vice versa.

Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments will always be undertaken by staff to assess if activities, actions or environments posts risks from an infection control standpoint to the children and staff of Little Stars on the Lane.

Hand washing

- Little Stars on the Lane has a hand washing policy which all staff promote and model for children, after using the toilet, before eating/preparing food, after wiping noses, waste disposal and mopping up spills.
- Staff must wash their hands, before preparing or serving food, before eating or drinking, after going to the toilet, assisting children going to the toilet, dealing with bodily fluids, cleaning procedures, caring for sick children, handling soiled clothing, dealing with waste and after removing disposable gloves.
- A wash hand basin is provided in each room with a constant supply of hot (no greater than 43c) and cold running water, liquid anti-bacterial soap and paper towels. A wash hand basin is also available in all bathrooms, kitchens and activity rooms.
- Children are encouraged to wash their hands with warm water and liquid soap under supervision after visiting the toilet, before eating, after sneezing, coughing or blowing noses, after handling animals, after touching a cut or sore and after outside play and activities. Clear guidance on handwashing is outlined for children and staff alike in our service.
- Staff will supervise and assist children to encourage effective handwashing, appropriate to their age.

Food preparation

- Staff always wear gloves when preparing and serving food and wash hands after removing gloves.
- Staff always wash their hands after prepping food and removing waste food and materials.
- Perishable food is kept in a refrigerator, between temperatures of 0 and 5 Celsius. Any perishable food left at room temperature for more than 2 hours will be discarded safely.
- Staff involved in helping children with toileting are not involved in preparing food.

Cleaning and the premises

- All staff are aware of their role in maintaining high standards of hygiene.

- Little Stars on the Lane reinforces good practice regarding keeping the environment and premises clean and safe.
- Spillages of blood, faeces, urine, vomit or other bodily fluids or excretions are cleaned immediately and with priority. Disposable tissue paper and mops are not be used for these and extreme caution is exercised at all times.
- Daily, weekly and monthly cleaning schedules are in place and records kept.
- Little Stars on the Lane has a contract with a bin removal company for the removal and disposal of all waste at Little Stars on the Lane.
- Our premises are free from pests and rodents and we have a contract with an external agent who checks our premises on a monthly basis.
- All staff receive regular support & supervision in relation to infection control and training is provided.
- We carry and maintain a good stock of cleaning products and tools to ensure that hygiene practices can be carried out at all times. Adequate supplies for cleaning are provided to be used, like clean cloths, gloves, aprons, mops, buckets and detergents.
- Toys and play materials are cleaned daily, with attention placed on especially soiled items. They are not brought into the toilet. Toys are chosen that are easy to clean and disinfect.
- Toys are not shared.
- Personal soft toys and items like blankets are not shared.
- Toilets, floors, shelves storing bags, tables and chairs and other areas are cleaned daily to help decrease the spread of infection, cleaning agents used are detailed on our cleaning schedules.
- Children have individual hairbrushes, toothbrushes, dental products, clothing and towels. These items are not be shared. Any soiled clothes are placed in a plastic bag, sealed and sent home with parents/guardians.
- At least once a day, even in winter, all rooms in the service are aired out.
- Master cleaning schedule located in the office and cleaning schedule for each room is digitally recorded and stored safely.

Immunisation

- Our immunisation policy is followed at all times with all children and staff.
- Children's immunisation records are obtained when children begin in Little Stars on the Lane. Parents are asked to update Little Stars on the Lane when children receive additional immunisations.
- Parents have a right to choose to whether to immunise their child or not.
- If a child is not immunised, for their own safety they may be excluded from Little Stars on the Lane if an infectious disease that they are not immunised against is circulating. Parents will always be consulted on this. We always work in the best interests of children's health.
- We provide information leaflets on immunisation schedules, oral hygiene and prevention of infection to parents.

Procedure for Managing an infectious illness

- Children are encouraged to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue before sneezing or coughing. Hands are washed after blowing noses, sneezing or coughing.
- Staff will report any illness to the manager/designated person in charge.
- Unwell children, with a temperature and/or specific signs and symptoms, will be excluded from the service until a diagnosis can be made. Staff can and will use their discretion when admitting a child back into Little Stars on the Lane, if they believe the child is still ill and cannot take part in their usual activities.
- Any child is displaying symptoms such as a cough, fever or breathing difficulties should not attend the service (COVID-19)
- Parents are advised to contact the service as soon as possible if their child is unwell and unable to attend.

- Children should remain at home if they are suffering from general diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 48 hours.
- A plan will be drawn up to help prevent the spread of the illness and the [HSE guidelines: Managing an infectious disease in childcare setting](#) will be followed.
- Communication will issue to parents if there is an infectious disease circulating in Little Stars on the Lane. This will be done through the parents whatsapp group and replicated face to face at drop off by staff to ensure everyone has received and understood the message.

Exclusion table:

The following exclusion periods are followed in Little Stars on the Lane. In certain instances, the exclusion period may be longer than outlined below:

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL/ CHILDCARE?				
Chicken Pox When scabs are dry	Conjunctivitis No need to stay out*	Diarrhoea or Vomiting 48 hours after the last episode	Flu 5 days after start of illness	Glandular Fever No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth No need to stay out*	Head Lice No need to stay out*	Impetigo When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Measles 4 days after rash appears	Mumps 5 days after swelling appears
Scabies After first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Slapped Cheek No need to stay out*	Threadworms No need to stay out*	Whooping Cough 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness

This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document. *No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.

Notifiable disease:

- A list of notifiable diseases is available from the [HSE](#). In the case of notified diseases or if the illness spreads the manager will notify the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate by filling out the [Notification of Incidents Form](#) and the HSE Public Health Department.
- When we have been contacted by the Department of Public Health, HSE, in our area and have been advised that we have a confirmed case as listed we will contact Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate. The Department of Public Health Medicine will advise as to the next steps regarding precautions to be taken in our premises and follow up of contacts and procedures.
- Parents will be informed verbally and in writing if an outbreak has occurred – all reasonable information on the outbreak will be provided to them.

COVID-19 Infection Control Guidelines in Little Stars on the Lane

- To prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Little Stars on the Lane, Little Stars on the Lane implements a “play pod” system.
- Play pods are organised across each room in Little Stars on the Lane, A record of play pods and their makeup is recorded and will be shared with the HSE and Public Health teams in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19.
- Pods, as much as practical, do not mix, share toys, play materials or equipment. Each pod also has different break times. Outdoor time is separate for each play pod.
- We follow the 2m physical distancing recommendation by the National Public Health Emergency Team for adults

- Little Stars on the Lane has 6 hand washing stations, and 6 hand sanitiser stations – all staff are encouraged to use and to follow our handwashing policy above.
- The National Public Health Emergency Team recommends the use of cloth face coverings in certain indoor settings. We ask our team to wear masks to ensure the safety of your children and our staff whilst Covid is circulating in the country. This will be reviewed as an evolving situation in line with public health advice.

Dealing with Suspected COVID-19 Cases in Little Stars on the Lane

If a child or staff member in Little Stars on the Lane feels unwell and develops symptoms:

- If a child develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, or shortness of breath while in Little Stars on the Lane, a staff member will take the child to office, which is our designated isolation room.
 - Parent/guardians will be called and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.
 - A staff member will remain with the child at all times until parent/guardian arrives. Due to the nature of COVID-19 physical distance will be needed to be retained as much as possible, and the staff member will need to wear a facemask and gloves.
- If a staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath while in the care facility ask them to go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They will be located 2 m away from others as much as possible.
 - They will be asked to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. .
 - They will be asked to wear a mask.
- If there is an emergency, staff will call an ambulance, and explain that the child or staff member is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Any rooms where children or staff need to be isolated is cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected once they leave.

What we do when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in Little Stars on the Lane

- We will contact parents who have children in the pod of the child/ staff member who has been diagnosed at our earliest possible opportunity. We will ask them to follow public health advice for close contacts of the diagnosed person. We advise all individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 to contact their GP for further advice.
- Little Stars on the Lane will liaise with local Public Health staff of the HSE to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- Little Stars on the Lane will notify Tusla Early Years Inspectorate of any confirmed case of COVID-19 in the service.
- An assessment of each childcare setting where this may occur will be undertaken by HSE public health staff.
- Advice on the management of children and staff who came into contact with the case will be based on this assessment.
- The HSE Public Health staff will also be in contact individually with anyone who has been in contact with the case to provide them with appropriate advice.
- Cleaning of Little Stars on the Lane will commence following HPSC advice and guidance.
- Symptomatic are advised to self-isolate and arrange to get tested for COVID-19.
- We will advise confirmed COVID-19 cases to continue to self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days and not return to Little Stars on the Lane until they are advised that it is safe to do so.
- Close contacts of a confirmed case will be advised to go home and restrict their movements for 14 days. Little Stars on the Lane will ask them to not come to Little Stars on the Lane for 14 days. As public health guidance is changing each week, we will revise these policies to follow evolving public health advice. This is also true of quarantine policies in relation to

overseas travel. We see public health advice from NPHE as the most up to date advice from those most qualified to deliver, therefore we will be led by them in terms of updating of this policy.